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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1237
INFO RUEHZH/HAITI COLLECTIVE
RUEHZN/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 0124
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY 0088
RUEHPU/AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE PRIORITY 0008
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SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: EAID PHUM PGOV PREL PREF HA VT

SUBJECT: CATHOLIC CHARITIES ESTABLISH AID PLAN FOR HAITI; REPORTS ON AREAS STILL LARGELY UNREACHABLE

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Summary

¶1. (U) Caritas Internationalis, the Vatican-based federation of Caritas humanitarian assistance national chapters, is supporting Catholic Relief Services (Caritas USA) and Caritas Haiti response to the earthquake in Haiti. A Caritas Internationalis team is on the ground in PAP. Caritas is focusing on medical services, particularly in areas where no aid has yet arrived, and is in contact with UN coordinating agencies. It is also providing food relief. Caritas' goal is to provide medical and nutrition aid to about 100,000 people. To do so, it has issued a flash appeal to Caritas chapters around the world. Caritas Internationalis President Cardinal Rodriguez Maradiaga of Honduras is hoping to travel to PAP as soon as possible. End summary.

¶2. (SBU) Poloff spoke with Patrick Nicholson, responsible for Caritas' external communications, and Monsignor Bob Vitillo, Caritas' point person on healthcare issues, on January 20. CRS and Caritas Haiti had established a permanent presence throughout the Island prior to the disaster. Caritas Internationalis, with Caritas Haiti and CRS, are managing all Catholic-based relief efforts. Caritas is working with the UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and other UN agencies. Caritas is not/not working with World Food Program distribution sites in PAP, citing tense situations and violence. Instead, it has established distribution points in PAP, Leogane, Petit & Grade Goave, Jacmel and Gronmore/Gonaives. Local Caritas volunteers report internally that many areas affected outside of PAP have not yet seen government or INGO relief on the ground. Working through its faith-based community groups, Caritas is managing to get food and aid to areas largely unreached by others.

¶3. (SBU) The situation in Leogane is particularly dramatic, according to Alistair Dutton, Caritas' international disaster relief specialist. Dutton reports that 85% of the city is destroyed and 20% of families have casualties that are not receiving medical aid. Confirming media reports of a looming health crisis, Caritas is focusing its efforts on reviving hospitals. Dutton tells us St Francois de la Salle Hospital (NFI) reopened two operating rooms on January 17 and will completely reopen all pre and post operating care facilities shortly.

¶4. (SBU) Caritas Internationalis' leadership team arrived in PAP January 16 to manage the international Catholic aid response. Staff from six Caritas organizations (Holland, Germany, France, Switzerland, Austria and Canada) will arrive shortly to help CRS and Caritas Haiti. When they arrive, Caritas will have 21 personnel on the ground to support those who were already in the country before the earthquake. Father Serge B. Chadic (Haiti) and Bill Canny (USA) are acting points of contact for personnel and logistical coordination, respectively. Caritas Internationalis President Cardinal Oscar Rodriguez Maradiaga (based in Honduras) is working to secure transportation to PAP on a Honduran government plane. Beyond these people, Caritas is not seeking to send additional international staff or leaders to Haiti at this time. Instead, it is encouraging Catholic aid organizations and individuals to support its flash appeal.

Flash Appeal

¶5. (U) Caritas is urging international Catholic Charities to make in-kind donations to meet needs in Haiti for the next four weeks: primarily focusing on food, water (purification, storage and distribution capabilities), and medical supplies. Caritas is planning to meet the needs of 100,000 people with this aid, and could expand its efforts if required. Most goods are arriving in Santo Domingo and being transported via trucks donated by Caritas Santo Domingo. Caritas is working with DoD to manage security and fuel issues but reports ongoing problems

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procuring fuel and growing security concerns at its storage facilities.

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